

REMARKS

The last Office Action of January 6, 2005, has been carefully considered. Reconsideration of the instant application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claims 15-32 are pending in the application. Claims 15, 18, 21, 22 have been amended. Claim 33 has been added. Claims 25-28 have been canceled. Claims 15-24, and 29-33 remain in this application.

It is noted that the drawing is objected to as failing to comply with 37 C.F.R. 1.84(p)(4) and 37 C.F.R. 1.83(a).

It is noted that the specification is objected to as containing errors.

It is further noted that claim 28 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claims 15, 16, 18-23, 29, 30 and 31 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 6,255,608 to Kawata et al. (hereinafter "Kawata")

Claim 17 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kawata in view of U.S. Pat. No. 4,400,672 to Bottelson (hereinafter "Bottelson")

Claims 24 and 32 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kawata in view of U.S. Pat. No. 4,527,849 to Marach (hereinafter "Marach")

Claims 25-28 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kawata in view of Marach, and further in view of U.S. Pat. No. 4,611,876 to Barrabes (hereinafter "Barrabes")

OBJECTION TO THE DRAWING

Applicant submits herewith replacement sheets, showing changes to Figs. 3 to 6 by clearly indicating the reference line of reference numeral "17" to point into the gap. No new matter has been added.

Withdrawal of the objection to the drawing is thus respectfully requested.

OBJECTION TO THE SPECIFICATION

The specification has been amended to consistently designate the cable lug with the reference symbol "R", the clamping support with the reference symbol "14", and the clamping opening with the reference symbol "17". Applicant has further amended the specification to indicate that the terms "recess 8" and "indentation 8" are used interchangeably. Other deficiencies noted in the Office Action have also been corrected.

Withdrawal of the objection to the specification is thus respectfully requested.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. §112, SECOND PARAGRAPH

The rejection of claim 28 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, has become moot by canceling the claim.

Withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph is thus respectfully requested.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

Claim 15, as amended herein, recites a switching device with shielding elements that extend substantially over the entire height of the housing, which is not disclosed or suggested by Kawata. Kawata also does not disclose or suggest that the switching device includes at least two spaced-apart terminals, wherein each terminal has a clamping opening and shielding elements disposed about the corresponding clamping opening, and wherein adjacent clamping opening are separated by at least two shielding elements having gap therebetween.

Claim 20, as amended herein, recites a switching device with a shielding element formed as one-piece on the housing in a region proximate to the terminal. The shielding elements are moved away from the lateral exterior housing surfaces towards the inside of the housing by a distance that prevents the shielding elements from contacting shielding elements of another switching device placed adjacent to the switching device. This arrangement lengthens the leakage path between adjacent switching devices.

Support for the amended claims can be found, for example, in paragraph [0055] of the specification and is clearly illustrated in FIGS. 1 and 2.

For the reasons set forth above, it is Applicant's contention that neither Kawata, nor any of the other cited references, teach or suggest the features of the present invention, as recited in amended claims 15 and 20.

As for the rejection of the retained dependent claims, these claims depend on claims 15 and 20, respectively, share their presumably allowable features, and therefore it is respectfully submitted that these claims should also be allowed.

Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 15, 16, 18-23, and 29-31 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and allowance of claims 1-5, 9 and 20 are thus respectfully requested.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claim 17 which depends from claim 15 and therefore contains all the limitations thereof, patentably distinguishes over the applied prior art in the same manner as claim 1. In addition, it is noted that Bottelson discloses a relay mounting device, but does not disclose any of the features missing from the Kawata reference discussed above.

Regarding the rejection of claims 24-28 and 32, claim 24 has been amended to include the features of claims 25-28, which have been canceled. As noted in the Office Action, the combination of Kawata and Marach does not disclose or suggest the thread-free region recited in claim 25. Barrabès discloses (col. 3, lines 65-68) that “the clamping screw 13 is equipped with an elastic stirrup portion 14 of a curved shape, mounted so as to be unlosable under the head 15 of screw 13 (between head 15 and screw thread 16).” The stirrup portion 14 of Barrabès is equivalent to the platelet 20 of the present application. However, unlike Barrabès’ stirrup portion 14, platelet 20 includes at least portions

of a thread, which allow the clamping screw 15 to be completely unscrewed from the clamping opening 17 (see Para. [0057] of the specification), whereas Barrabès' clamping screw 13 is specifically "unlosable".

At least for these reasons, claim 24, as amended herein, is patentably distinct from the combination of Kawata, Marach, and Barrabès, and Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of amended claim 24 and claim 32, which depends from amended claim 24, be withdrawn.

CITED REFERENCES

Applicant has also carefully scrutinized the further cited prior art and finds it without any relevance to the newly submitted claims. It is thus felt that no specific discussion thereof is necessary.

CONCLUSION

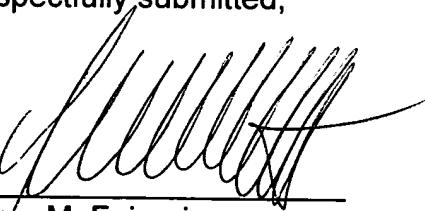
In view of the above presented remarks and amendments, it is respectfully submitted that all claims on file should be considered patentably differentiated over the art and should be allowed.

Reconsideration and allowance of the present application are respectfully requested.

Should the Examiner consider necessary or desirable any formal changes anywhere in the specification, claims and/or drawing, then it is respectfully requested that such changes be made by Examiner's Amendment, if the

Examiner feels this would facilitate passage of the case to issuance. If the Examiner feels that it might be helpful in advancing this case by calling the undersigned, applicant would greatly appreciate such a telephone interview.

Respectfully submitted,

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AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS WITHOUT MARKINGS

IN THE DRAWING:

Figs. 3-6 have been amended.